

European Security & Russia

A workshop at CNAC, 13 April 2001

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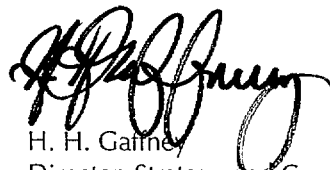
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Summary

The CNA Corporation has had a program of seminars with its Russian counterparts since 1991. We have discussed a range of issues, from strategic nuclear matters to naval cooperation. For the seminar we are planning in Russia in the summer or fall of 2001, one of the prime agenda items will be the long-term future of the relation of Russia to European security (assuming the United States has a long-term future relation in Europe as well). As part of our preparations for the seminar in Russia, we organized a workshop to discuss the issues of Russia and European security. It was held at CNA on Friday, 13 April.

The format of the workshop involved five speakers, speaking for 10-15 minutes each, each addressing one of five scenarios described below, followed by discussion with the audience. The scenarios were chosen to raise a full range of issues. The scenarios included (1) NATO expansion to Russia's borders, (2) bringing Russia into NATO, (3) Russia and Europe gradually converging in matters of security, (4) Europe creates a security infrastructure separate from US and from Russia, and (5) drift in European security arrangements.

The speakers laid out these scenarios in detail. But the detail obscured two major conclusions that could be drawn from the whole workshop: (1) when all is said and done, it is not clear what European security is; and (2) the Russians were absent. Under these conditions, we can conclude that there is likely to be much drift in European security arrangements (scenario (5)).

With regard to the first conclusion, on European security, it tends to be all about the politics and steps of expanding membership in both NATO and the EU (European Union). The EU talks about both "deepening and expanding"—of adding to the community's functions and expanding membership, but NATO talks only about "expanding." Both organizations face quandaries of standards for entrance and the complications for decision-making with larger

memberships. The EU has many decisions to make, but it should be pointed out that NATO decision-making, other than for expansion, would only come into play when the member countries struggled with a conflict and whether to collectively commit forces to resolve it. This is not a pretty process, as the Macedonian situation (July 2001) demonstrates. Both organizations struggle to preserve and create new forms of professional military associations—the EU with ESDP and NATO with new entrants’ forces coming up to NATO standards. Otherwise, there was no talk of threats, though the group was reminded that missile defense would be a big issue over the next few years. In summary, it was hard to tell at this workshop what European security was about, other than the maintenance of talking shops on one hand and maintaining the associations of professional military establishments on the other. These are not bad outcomes, given the history of war in Europe.

With regard to the second conclusion, there were no Russians present at the workshop (the workshop was intended as a preliminary gathering of views before CNA went on to hold seminars with its Russian counterparts). In any case, the speakers and the participants had difficulty considering Russia as “European.” Russia was always referred to as something standing outside Europe. It was hardly noted that many of the Russians themselves, including President Putin, talk incessantly of their association with Europe, and do not invoke “Eurasianism” or “Slavophilism” these days. By the same token, though, the discussion of the EU, its expansion, and all the functions it is undertaking, many of which can be called “soft” security matters, tended to take center stage at this workshop. This can mean the exclusion of the United States as well. Just beneath the surface is the fear of the emergence of a solid European voting bloc on security matters. But then, no one quite focused on what a European is, unless it is the group of bureaucrats in Brussels. There were differing views on how well Russia and Germany were relating, but the dominant view seemed to be that Germany was closest to Russia of all the countries, notwithstanding the experience of World War II.

Much, therefore, remains to be done to explore and explain the relations between European security and Russia. It would seem indispensable and useful to include Russians in such discussions. There are no

threats or classic military confrontations these days. They could arise, though hardly in ways that characterized the past, by the creation of blocs and lines, with their consequent exclusions, of both Russia and the United States. The other path is the development of a security community, fuzzy in its boundaries and fuzzy in its functions, but a community nonetheless.

The speakers addressed the following Scenarios:

Scenario 1: NATO expansion to Russia's borders

We asked that these remarks portray the future of European security in the event of significant NATO expansion, e.g., into the Baltic and/or the Balkans.

Scenario 2: Bring Russia into NATO

We asked that these remarks examine a future where Russia is brought into NATO as a full member. We also asked that the remarks address the process through which Russian accession to NATO occurs.

Scenario 3: Russia and Europe gradually converge in matters of security

For this scenario, we suggested that either no further NATO expansion would take place or that NATO expansion would be limited to countries that are not threatening to Russia such as Slovenia or Slovakia. Instead, we suggested that Europe and Russia would gradually develop new institutions that help to bridge the gap between European and Russian security needs. We asked the speaker to sketch out what these new institutions might look like and how they would be intended to affect European security.

Scenario 4: Europe creates a security infrastructure separate from US and from Russia

For this scenario, we asked the speaker to consider that European security would be to some extent disconnected from both the United

States and NATO, perhaps through the establishment of ESDI as a serious alternative to NATO. We suggested that the European Union might then become a separate and equal player in a security triangle with Russia and the United States—both of which countries would be considered outsiders as far as Europeans were concerned.

Scenario 5: Drift in European security arrangements

For this scenario, we suggested that the speaker address the propositions that NATO doesn't expand (or at least not very much), the EU has difficulty institutionalizing its defense arrangements, and continuing tension between the US and Russia and the US and the EU means that overall development of a security community drifts along without resolution.

Scenario 1: NATO expansion to Russia's borders

The dominant factor in European security is the shift after the Cold War in the relative power positions of the EU and Russia. Russia was the stronger power throughout the Cold War, but it is now a far weaker power relative to the EU (with the exception of largely useless nuclear forces).

Given the current situation and its likely extension into the future, the EU and NATO will expand up to Russia's borders. This scenario is seen as quite likely to occur. Political considerations both in Europe and in the US encourage a rapid and extensive enlargement. The first round of expansion is seen as having occurred successfully. US leaders see NATO enlargement as an opportunity to make Europe whole, free and peaceful, allowing the US to focus on other, more troubled regions of the world. Europeans likewise favor uniting the continent under a single security umbrella. It would be beneficial for NATO expansion to occur in tandem with EU expansion. The question is whether this will happen in one big bang over a very short term, or whether it will take place in incremental steps over a ten to fifteen year period.

Enlargement is a new and risky enterprise for both the EU and NATO. The attempt to unify Europe as a peaceful whole with about 25-30 members is difficult to achieve. Russia would strongly oppose the "big bang" of growth, while a long process of slow enlargement will likely be more acceptable to them. NATO needs to come up with a 10 to 15 year strategic plan for enlargement. During this period, NATO would need to persuade Russia that the reason for expansion is to unify Europe, not to threaten Russia. The best strategy would be a gradual expansion, adding a new member, say, every two years.

Whatever enlargement strategy is chosen, the inclusion of the Baltic States will be the keystone. To the Russians, Central Europe and the Balkans will be messy and costly for the West to absorb, but the Baltics would signal a clear division of Europe with Russia "outside the wall." While there are no strategic reasons to include the Baltics in NATO, they should be included for cultural reasons. The Baltic countries are becoming more European every day so it makes sense to include them in European institutions.

The Russian problems with enlargement of NATO and the EU are basically psychological. They accepted US leadership of the West during the Cold War as a way to limit the influences of Germany and France within the West. The Cold War alliance of the US-UK-Germany is being replaced with an EU dominated by France and Germany. These two countries together have as many people as Russia and a combined economy 5 times larger. The Russians are unsure of the direction of this new power constellation. They are certain that the Europeans do not view them as European, and would never let them into European organizations.

Russia's weakness may have a negative impact on European and US security. NATO enlargement is not the most important issue in US-Russian relations. The US should therefore focus on securing Russian help in dealing with regional conflicts in southern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, and in preventing WMD proliferation. It needs to find ways to put limits on Russian-Chinese military and political collaboration. In return the US should treat Russia like a great power and help Russia recover economically.

Scenario 2: Bring Russia into NATO

The inclusion of Russia into NATO can be seen as part of a five hundred year process of expanding the West. The West has been successful, in part, because it has incorporated defeated opponents into its institutions and shared the benefits of membership with former adversaries.

The inclusion of Russia would shift current elite and public opinions in Russia and the West that are trapped in mindsets that see Russia as a hopeless state or NATO as a tool for extending US hegemony and dominating Russia in the future.

The inclusion of Russia would solve all of the other problems of enlarging NATO and the EU and prevent Russia from acting as an open enemy when both organizations do expand. The rest of Europe could join NATO without fear of “what will Russia say?” It would corner and isolate China in world politics. It would lead to combined efforts against Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism. There would also be a balance within the alliance created by the US, the EU, and Russia, as NATO would evolve internally to accept the new, special member.

However, there are significant hurdles to overcome if NATO is to expand to include Russia.

- First, the West will have to make a psychological break with the past. Both the West and Russia must reconceptualize NATO as a cooperative organization that does not need to be hostile to Russia. Currently, opponents to Russian membership argue that Russian membership would run counter to both NATO and Russian culture. But Russian attitudes toward NATO depend largely on Russian perceptions of how it is being treated by the West. If it seemed that NATO was truly welcoming Russia, Russians would support NATO membership

because they still want to be part of the wealthy and successful West. The Western countries in turn need to begin to see Russia as a normal European power, with its interests tied to economics, security, and the culture of the West.

- Second, NATO will have to adapt its decision-making structures to deal with a second large nuclear power and an expansion of its integrated military command to deal with new geographic responsibilities and the addition of 140 million new members on the borders of some dangerous areas. Most believe it would be difficult to add such a large and powerful new member, especially one that would potentially be able to obstruct initiatives the other members would like to take. This problem can be overcome by adjusting NATO procedures. Furthermore, Russia represents only 12% of the total population of the current NATO members. This proportion is not overwhelming, but it is too large for Russia to be excluded from the most important European security institution. The existing NATO members and Russia must jointly develop a plan for Russia's incorporation into NATO.
- Third, The final set of objections is geopolitical. Russia is perceived as frequently acting in opposition to NATO objectives. This conflict will partially be eliminated by the very act of joining. Existing NATO members frequently disagree on issues, yet the alliance continues to function. Russia will have to start acting as an ally, or at least as a friendly state. Objectives can be aligned further by all the members participating in joint threat assessments and drafting a joint security doctrine. In those areas where interests truly diverge, the parties can agree to disagree. Russia will have to take concrete foreign and security policy steps that help the West increase its security if it wants to be taken seriously as a prospective member.

The scenario of Russian membership is not on the present agenda, either in Russia or among current NATO members. But there is no long run alternative to including Russia in NATO. NATO will continue to expand and is likely to eventually include the Baltic countries as members. This expansion, particularly if it includes former Soviet republics, will lead to an increase in Russia-NATO tensions that will

only be resolved if Russia is also included in the organization. If Russia is not a NATO member, it will inevitably once again become NATO's enemy.

Since NATO was founded in opposition to the Soviet Union, negative attitudes toward Russian membership are deeply embedded in the psychologies of the leaders of member countries. But these attitudes can be changed by noting that previous enemies have been incorporated into the predecessors of the Atlantic alliance over the last 400 years and by recognizing that Russia has not always been an enemy of these historical alliances

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Scenario 3: Gradual convergence between Russia and Europe on security issues

Rapid changes in the EU are leading it to face the Russia question very quickly. EU-Russian relations are based on the inescapable facts that these are the two largest European powers and that the EU is expanding ever closer to Russia. The EU's strategic approach toward Russia is focused on promoting economic reform, democratization, and human rights (i.e., in Chechnya). The EU also wants to reduce nuclear stockpiles and to engage the Russians in other issues like peacekeeping and crisis management (the Balkans), border controls, combating organized crime, and trade in natural resources (oil and gas). These are the “soft” security issues.

The EU sees economics as the key to future stability in the region and as the lever for engaging Russia-EU cooperation. The EU believes that Russia's economic integration into Europe will contribute to both European and Russian growth, stability, and security. Economics could help Russia build a modern infrastructure and encourage them to have a European identity. To accomplish this, the EU would like to remove trade barriers between itself and Russia. The main difference between this EU perspective and that of the United States is that the US views Russia through the prism of global and nuclear power, whereas Europe views Russia as a neighboring country.

To this end, the Europeans have agreed on common foreign policies toward Russia for aid and economic relations, and they have openly talked about including the Baltics in the EU as an alternative to NATO membership in the near term. The basic institutional frameworks for Russian integration are already in place. They include the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which was signed in 1994 and contains the governing institutions for EU-Russian contact, and the EU Common Strategy toward Russia, adopted in June 1999.

Russia has a positive view of EU enlargement, even including the Baltic States. Enlargement will increase Russian opportunities for trade, as long as it is willing and able to harmonize its practices with European standards, improve transport links, modernize border crossings, and improve environmental standards. It will also increase stability on Russia's western borders. The greatest challenge of EU enlargement for Russia involves the exclave of Kaliningrad, soon to be surrounded by EU member states. Kaliningrad could serve as a model and lead to a consensus on security among the states of Northern Europe (including the Baltics).

Regarding security issues, the EU emphasis is less on architecture and more on engaging Russia regarding practical cooperation in crisis management, particularly in Southeast Europe. EU and Russian cooperation in the Balkans, on organized crime, on drugs and terrorism could lay the foundation for a closer relationship in the future. At the same time, the EU is alert to the risk of Russia seeking to drive a wedge between the EU and the US, either on ESDP or on missile defense. Russia and the EU will need to work closely together in this region on issues of border policing, crime control, and narcotics.

Scenario 4: Europe creates a security infrastructure separate from the US and Russia

The creation of a separate EU security identity would represent a victory for France and for Russia (in a near-sighted manner), and a defeat for the US. A separate ESDP would signal the independence of Europe from America's dominance of NATO. The French have long sought to establish a European security and defense capability separate from NATO and the US. It would achieve the long held Russian objective of dividing Europe from the US. Moscow would also be happy to see tension among the NATO allies. And it would signal a serious blow to US global leadership, adding the Europeans to the Russians and the Chinese as counterweights to US power.

This situation could be created if the US unilaterally left the Balkans, if it pursued NMD over the objections of its allies, if it proceeded with the transformation of the military without regard to its ability to work with coalition partners, and if it acted unilaterally in global institutions on security issues (land mines, International Criminal Court, arms control treaties).

An independent EU would have to go beyond the commitments made at Helsinki and Brussels. It would have to have more robust capabilities, and a unified security policy. The new EU force as currently authorized would include the 60,000-man rapid reaction force able to perform humanitarian, peacekeeping, and crisis management tasks. The French seek a force with greater combat capability independent of NATO. However, such a force would require its own lift, logistics, and C4I, and would have to be at least twice the size. These challenges seriously inhibit the creation of an independent EU security identity. Increasing capabilities would require the Europeans to spend more and spend it more efficiently. Neither of these two steps is likely to happen for domestic political reasons. A unified security policy and the will to act as a unit is difficult for the current leaders of

the EU and it will get progressively more difficult as the EU expands from 15 to 20 to 30 members.

The effects of strong Europe on the US will be largely positive, in spite of the first assumptions about a negative impact. NATO would gradually become weaker, with a token US presence to signal acceptance of Article V commitments against largely non-existent threats. Crisis management missions in the region would be left to the EU, freeing up the US to direct resources to the Persian Gulf and Asia. Politically, both the US Congress and the President could take political credit for reducing expenses and troop presence in Europe. The US influence in Europe would be reduced, but so would the threat, and there would be the chance for a real partnership based on shared values between the US and Europe.

Although first reactions in Russia might be positive, the implications of a strong, independent EU for Russia would be very negative. Russia would have no chance of dominating European states bound together with economic and security power. There would be a fundamental power shift from the US to Germany, not a Russian goal by any means. Such a situation would still be psychologically threatening to Russia. The EU would lock out Russia and some other unstable states to the East as it put its time and energy into deepening, not broadening the EU. Russia would be locked out of such an EU and other European structures. Instead of facing one large power (the US), Russia would be confronted with two large powers who opposed its inclusion in the West and who were closer to each other than either was to Russia.

The EU is unlikely to develop into an equal security player in the US-EU-Russia relationship because the Europeans will not devote the necessary resources. But if it does, such a development would be far more worrisome for Moscow than for Washington.

Scenario 5: Drift in European security arrangements

A continued drift in Europe's security architecture would be characterized by little growth in NATO, introspective EU policies, the failure to develop a robust Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and ESDP, a tepid American commitment to European peacekeeping missions, and Russian nationalism and hostility to NATO.

There are several good reasons for limiting NATO enlargement. NATO members would not want to incorporate undemocratic or conflict-prone countries. Most of the remaining plausible candidates for membership lack adequate defense capabilities. Little growth in NATO would be the result of US and European fears about taking in more countries that would be consumers of security, rather than contributors to NATO. NATO's European members are not very interested in further expansion of the alliance. The Germans fear the reaction of Russia to the inclusion of the Baltic States while the French insist on the inclusion of Romania, a not very stable country, in any future expansion.

Recent experiences with the Hungarians and the Czechs point to greater problems with further expansion to countries with weak economies and political structures unwilling to support defense spending. NATO would then be a weak organization (a talking shop like the OSCE) including only states that face no threat and have no desire to increase the scope of the alliance.

The EU will not be able to institutionalize its defense and security dimension more than to a limited extent. There are at least two different versions of what ESDI should be, i.e., those of the French and the British. Whoever loses out in this debate will lose interest and perhaps opt out of ESDI altogether. At the same time, Turkey will remain outside the EU indefinitely.

EU introspection and its likely failure to develop robust capabilities are linked together. The EU obsession with its internal economic situation and the need to maintain popular support for social programs argue against an outward looking and globally involved EU. Continued weakness of EU security structures would be exposed in a crisis and lead to calls for a US bailout and the subsequent weakening of EU positions both regionally and globally. Other EU problems that could lead to drift in security institutions include the influence of national positions within the organization, which were exposed at Nice last year, and lack of any public support for a strong EU role in global security.

The US and Europe will continue to have tensions over burden sharing for defense and European security. European countries are not spending enough on defense. At the same time, as EU attempts further deepening, its internal divisions will become increasingly visible and the EU decision-making process will become even more cumbersome. Incorporation of new EU members will depend on the existing members' willingness to reform the Common Agricultural Policy, a dubious prospect.

A half-hearted US commitment to Europe would be another ingredient for continued drift. US withdrawal might galvanize EU action and US dominance would stifle EU contributions to common defense. In the meantime, "muddling through" in the Balkans and postponing questions of burden sharing, power sharing, and enlargement in NATO merely keep the alliance going without any strategic direction.

US-EU tensions are also likely to increase due to trade disputes, perceptions on both sides that the other is not pulling its weight in NATO, differences on regional problems and environmental issues, and a general European dislike of American unilateralism.

The final piece of the puzzle would be a nationalist and resentful Russia. Tensions between Russia, the US and the EU will increase for several reasons. Russian resentment of the US will grow as its economy continues to falter and as disagreements over missile defense, WMD proliferation, and NATO expansion come to the fore. Russia will attempt to move closer to the EU to counter the US, hoping to strengthen the emerging German-Russian axis and build on anti-

hegemonic anti-US sentiments in Western Europe. Without effective reforms, or any involvement from a disillusioned West, Russia would view US BMD plans and the EU's "deepening" as measures taken against their involvement in European institutions. Russia would give continued attention to China and would attempt to obstruct new arrangements in Europe. These Russian actions would provide Europeans and Americans excuses for their own inactivity on future security architectures (i.e., undertaking any changes that might upset delicate relations with Russia).

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Discussion

The discussion at the workshop focused on six main issue areas:

- The emergence of a new security environment in Europe
- The question of whether the integration of Russia into European security institutions could only occur after the emergence of a new threat
- The future role of NATO
- The relationship between Russia and the EU
- The role of missile defense
- Russian attitudes toward Germany.

A new European security environment

The issues that dominate European security today are different from even five years ago. Americans have been slow to appreciate the changes and need to fundamentally rethink what these changes mean for US relations with Europe. The key issue will be whether the US, Russia, and the EU can cooperate on security challenges emerging from the South—though the “South” is right now the Balkans, with other threats from that direction—for instance, Islam—being more diffuse at the moment.

ESDP is a European response to these perceptions of the security environment, especially following the war over Kosovo. It would allow the EU to play a more prominent role in resolving European security issues and in contingencies. The absence of something like ESDP severely limited the EU's security role during the past decade, as witnessed in the Balkans. ESDP seeks to marshal member states' resources to deal with problems such as failing states and other conflicts in neighboring regions without necessarily relying on the US. With ESDP, the Europeans believe that the EU would have a military

instrument that would complement, not compete with, both NATO and the EU's trade, diplomatic and other instruments.

Nevertheless, ESDP is unlikely to go beyond the modest scale envisioned by Helsinki. It would help to maintain security in the Balkans, especially if the US withdrew, but perhaps not in some larger war elsewhere, e.g., the Gulf. No one conceives of ESDP being a threat to Russia.

The Russia-EU relationship

The participants agreed that Russia remains positive about EU expansion, despite having little chance of actually being admitted into the EU itself. This may be due to Russia's increasing turn toward Europe as a response to disappointment about the Bush administration's attitude toward them. Russia-EU economic ties are already very strong because of Russian energy exports to Europe and European exports of consumer goods to Russia (and the debts owed by Russia). The kind of functional steps taken by the EU as it enlarges are hardly a threat to Russia—even those that include the Baltic states. At the same time, the Russians still feel excluded in a cultural and psychological sense, a sense that compounds their feeling of a lack of identity.

Does the integration of Russia into European security arrangements require a new threat to emerge?

The case has been made that the North Atlantic security community has a history of incorporating former enemies that goes back over 400 years. The incidences were not disputed. But each time a former enemy was incorporated, the action was precipitated by the emergence of a new threat. It is possible that the new threat that would bring Russia and the Atlantic alliance together would be a powerful China. The US sought to align China against the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s. An increase in China's military strength and its intrusions into Russia or Central Asia could induce Russia to seek NATO military support. But so far, Russia has seen China as less of a threat than a partner against US hegemony.

An opposing view that emerged during the discussion argued that the emergence of a new threat is not necessary for Russia to be incorporated into NATO. The incorporation of Russia could take place simply in order to maintain European harmony—a Europe defined more broadly to include Russia.

The future of NATO

NATO is shorthand for many different things. It is a security alliance of sovereign states, with many transatlantic talking shops, that maintains a unified military command structure, and draws on the overwhelming American military superiority. In discussing the future of NATO and Russia's role within it, we must be clear which dimensions of NATO we are talking about.

For example, Russia could benefit from being more involved in NATO's talking shops. However, its leaders underestimate their importance, focusing instead almost exclusively on NATO's military planning and force dimensions. The Russians were surprised by NATO's military activism and effectiveness during the Kosovo war. They saw NATO's intervention in Kosovo as a threat to the international security system because it violated what they believed to be long-held international security norms of non-interference in internal affairs (a norm that they themselves treated cavalierly under the Brezhnev Doctrine during Soviet times). They also were surprised that NATO could go to war so quickly. They may fear that the alliance might intervene in Chechnya to oppose Russian actions there. At the same time, they believe that the only reliable defense they have left is their strategic nuclear forces. This belief increases the risk of an unintended catastrophic war.

The participants were divided on the effect of Russian membership in NATO on its future role in European security. One side argued that it was most important that NATO not lose its military role and structure. The talking shop aspect is important, but NATO must remain more than just a talking shop. Article 5 is a hedge against a revival of a military threat against Europe. If Russia entered NATO, it would become more of a talking shop and less of a military alliance with an organized combat capability. Such an organization would still be

useful for crisis management in Balkans-type situations, but not against the threat of aggression.

The other side disagreed, arguing that Russia's entry into NATO would enhance the organization's collective security role, rather than transforming it into nothing more than a talking shop. In this view, European security would be enhanced by the development of a joint NATO/Russia security doctrine. The incorporation of Russia would also make clear that the incorporation of smaller East European states into NATO was not aimed at protecting them from Russia, but at ensuring the stability of the region overall.

Missile defense

Ballistic missile defense was raised as a key issue that will only increase in importance over time. It was thought that Europeans are concerned that the Bush administration will require them to contribute to any US missile defense that also protects Europe while creating the very instability against which the defense would be needed. Russians are strongly opposed to any unilateral U.S. decisions to deploy missile defenses, but would not be averse to a theater ballistic missile defense system that allows for Russia-NATO cooperation.

The future of Russian-German relations

Members of the group debated Russian-German relations. One side argued that Russians continue to hate Germans because of the World War II experience. They further argued that Russians fear German dominance of Europe, noting that the reunited Germany's continuance in NATO could be a mechanism for restoring such dominance. This is why Gorbachev did not insist on NATO's dissolution upon the collapse of East Germany, but did seek to have the reunited Germany excluded from the alliance. The other side argued that whatever anti-German sentiment remains is found predominantly among the older generation, whose members are dying. Younger Russians, according to this view, are less anti-German and dislike NATO because its expansion appears to break promises made to Russia upon German reunification.

Analysis

Underlying issues and considerations

We set up these scenarios as straw men, ideal types. They were meant to surface the issues and considerations that conscientious politicians must face as they work out security arrangements across time, presumably in an evolutionary manner that permits consultations and adjustments.

An underlying assumption was that Russia must somehow be related to European security, but at least the first scenario—NATO expansion right up to Russia's borders—would mean that the relationship would be antagonistic. On one hand, people talk about security alliances and their need for enemies. On the other, there is talk of the development of security communities, which scares fighting men who need enemies and scenarios to plan against.

Organizationally, at the top are the political relationships and talk shops involved. These relationships raise questions of voting, e.g., across the spectrum from consensus (which is not voting, a concept not well understood by Americans) to majority or weighted voting of some sort. A particular concern is the possible emergence of bloc positions. At the bottom are the professional/functional relationships among military establishments, formally coordinated by international planning cells. Here the questions are of bureaucracies sustaining the institutions.

All of these arrangements are clouded by the question of manageability as the numbers of countries involved increase, and the possible appearance of *directoires* as a solution (as was practically the case for Operation Allied Force), or, to put it another way, dominant countries vs. dominant secretaries general vs. dominant bureaucracies.

This workshop was supposed to be about Russia and European security. Russians were absent—it was almost all Americans (one person from the UK) that carried on the discussion. Thus, a discussion about Russia and Europe turned into mostly a discussion about European security, and practically into a discussion about EU vs. NATO as the manager of that security.

Analysis of the Workshop presentations and discussion

I. Which institution can better provide for European security—the EU or NATO (or Europe alone vs. including the United States)?

It was not clear from the presentations and discussions what European security is supposed to be. There was a sense that stability is the desirable end, and that inclusiveness provides that stability, providing those included are not disruptive or too dependent. This is called “meeting standards.” No external threats were discussed—Russia was not considered a threat. But then Russia was hardly considered for inclusion—it's just there as a problem.

In the first scenario—expand NATO up to Russian borders, but exclude Russia—it was argued that Europe must be united to remain conflict-free. But this unity does not include Russia. Yet how can Europe be conflict-free, if it leaves Russia outside its security frameworks and thumbs its collective nose at Russia's security concerns by incorporating the Baltic States into NATO?

The idea that an expanded NATO is the engine that can unify Europe puts the cart before the horse. The alliance can add new members, but the old members assert that new members would be able to function in the alliance only if they subscribe to European ideals and ways of doing business. The prospect of NATO membership can lead to convergence on these ideals for many countries, but the common view is that NATO would be better off delaying offering actual membership until the prospective member countries have become more “European.” Who is to judge what it is to be “European”? The United States presumably qualifies, despite its distance.

Russian opposition to expansion creates a dilemma for NATO member states. On the one hand, they fear that the expansion of NATO to Russia's borders will cause Russia to isolate itself from the rest of Europe. The possibilities of some new kind of Cold War might then exist. On the other hand, the NATO member states do not want to be perceived as giving Russia a de facto veto on NATO expansion. They also want to ensure that the Baltic States see themselves as an integral part of Europe. In sum, Russian opposition to NATO expansion has affected the likely trajectory of future expansion and has increased the possibility of a serious deterioration of relations between NATO and Russia. There is an obvious answer: include Russia in any dialogue about the evolution of European security arrangements. They might well have something to offer since no one else has answers, except for mindless expansion.

Thus, these scenarios and the discussion that followed hardly suggested, and, indeed, suggested the opposite, that neither Europeans nor Americans consider Russians to be Europeans. Yet everything Putin says indicates he thinks and aspires toward Europe. Elite Russians think that way (the ordinary people just survive). Elite Russians simply don't take identity from China or Iran. The Russian point of view was simply absent from this workshop.

There was a tendency in this workshop to discuss NATO and EU enlargement in tandem. But each process has its own dynamic and is pursued by two different sets of actors, almost without regard for each other. Each sees itself as the unifier of Europe and the guarantor of peace and stability internally and with outside countries—of which Russia may be the only example, except for Turkey, which somehow hangs on the edge of each community.

There was a sense that slow NATO expansion does not mean drift in the alliance or in its role in Europe. NATO has always taken in new members only slowly and cautiously. It then takes a decade for a new member to become fully integrated into the alliance (see Spain, West Germany). The new members of 1999 and beyond would be no different, and would probably take even longer to integrate, given the lack of any urgency and the long distances their economies must go.

NATO as a collection of “talking shops” is one of NATO's important functions in maintaining stability, if that is what European security is all about. NATO serves as a forum for coordinating security policies among the West, as a tool for integrating the East, and as a place for engagement. As both Desert Storm and Kosovo demonstrated in their different ways, it is the forum for creating coalitions to handle security problems faced by one or multiple alliance members. To denigrate this function is to concentrate on NATO solely as a military tool, not as a political-military organization.

EU views that economic relations provide stability to Europe and have the potential to extend stability eastward into Russia do not take into account the role of security institutions in creating the conditions necessary for political and economic development. NATO, not the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, had the responsibility for guaranteeing European security throughout the Cold War. The prospective members of both NATO and the EU in Eastern Europe cite EU membership as a long-term goal. They think of joining the EU after they have moved under a security umbrella provided by NATO and the US—but that may be because NATO is less bureaucratic and easier to join. It could well turn out, though, that one or more Baltic countries could end up in the EU before NATO.

The ability of the EU to create a military capability in the future to perform Balkans-like operations without the United States is severely limited. The demands of European publics (and their fellow Cabinet ministers) place restraints on defense efforts across the continent. The EU is more likely to evolve policies that emphasize soft security measures, while any employment of forces organized by the EU would be for peacekeeping. This would certainly be the case so long as NATO exists and the United States plays a strong role in it. This raises the question of Russia relating to the EU security structure as opposed to the NATO structure—to the extent that any real separation appears between them in the years ahead.

II. Is Russia really part of Europe, or capable of being so?

The workshop brought out the tendency among security specialists and Europeanists to think of Russia as an object of European and

American policies rather than a participant. Yet Russia would always have some kind of influence on European security, given history, and because it is there as a big country. A complete picture of the possible scenarios regarding Russia's place in European security arrangements must be analyzed—together with the Russians, which the U.S. and the Europeans can do now that they are not hiding behind the Iron Curtain.

If it is important for Europe to be unified for the continent to be conflict-free, then how can it be unified without including Russia? Or is Russia not part of Europe, whatever that means? What prevents a dialogue toward defining mutual interest in security, if security really is an issue? The economics loom as more of a problem in creating a community—security or otherwise—than military security. The West thought it was trying to help Russia recover economically, but the advice was not apt for Russia's circumstances, financial aid was meager (even from IMF), debts piled up on top of old Soviet debts, the Russian oligarchs emerged and went off in unexpected directions, capital flight took place, and now the Russians think they have to manage their economy independently.

The real issue at the heart of enlarging NATO up to Russia's borders is that the US and the Europeans do not see the Russians as a member of their community. There is no indication that the “transatlantic community” is ready to become a “Eurasian-transatlantic community.” The biggest gap, as raised in the discussions, is cultural. But the West is also not willing to import the chaos, weakness, and ethnic disputes of Eurasia in an attempt to resolve those problems. It is ironic that Russia will have to achieve stability in order to join the West, as opposed to the West incorporating Russia as a means to increase Russia's stability (a stated threat to regional peace).

It was thought that including Russia in NATO would require more of a sea-change in Russian society than in the West. The normal functioning of basic Western institutions is beyond the scope of Russian political experience. But they cannot gain the experience unless they participate in a meaningful way. Russia does not know how to work within a consensus organization like NATO (it sees US hegemony and vetoes, and voting blocs like at the UN).

Even a nationalist Russia may still be receptive to an opening from the West. Indeed, the more self-confident the Russians are of their identity, the easier it would be for them participate. The essence of NATO's silence procedure is that the country doesn't lose its sovereignty if it remains silent (unlike inside the U.S. Government). Russia's security is not fundamentally threatened by NATO, a strong EU, or US actions on Europe's periphery. Russian has much bigger problems along its southern border and vis-à-vis China. Russia's dwindling population and crumbling will continue to plague its efforts to cope with these two challenges. In order to adequately address these issues, Russian cooperation with the West would make sense, even to a nationalist Russia that might still be harboring resentment over Kosovo and past enlargement.

III. Is the EU better positioned for good relations with Russia than NATO?

Most of the other scenarios can lead one to the implication that Europe rather than the U.S. should carry the load of West-Russia interaction. In the current international environment, security cooperation with Russia—in whatever form that might turn out to be—might be more likely to develop if Europe takes the lead. Because of their perception of American arrogance, unilateralism, and hostility to Russian interests, it may well be that Russians are currently more willing to accept European proposals than proposals that come from the U.S.

Allowing European states and the EU to take the lead on discussing European security issues with Russia would allow the United States and Russia to focus on other regions where they do share common interests, such as Asia and the Middle East. Relations with China, engagement with Iran, containing the Taliban, and Caspian energy are all areas where the US and Russia should be able to find common ground.

But a “strategic partnership” between the EU and Russia would be difficult to achieve because both entities are more internally preoccupied at the present time. Moreover, most EU members are closer to

the US than they are to Russia and they don't want to be in the position of having to play one off against the other.

EU and Russia cooperation on "soft security" issues is possible because it mainly involves forces other than the military. Working to stop organized crime, drugs, migration, terrorism, requires police cooperation, not military. Even these "new security" areas will suffer from the lack of resources on Russia's part, and the difficulty in forging a consensus over how to handle the problems within the context of European rights and Russian adherence to European standards.

EU and Russian cooperation on peacekeeping and crisis management is quite possible, if we knew what new situations might be involved. Russian forces in Bosnia and Kosovo have, by all accounts, been professional and cooperative, even as they function under international command. But such cooperation would also be made difficult by differing standards, the lack of Russian resources, and the political accommodations necessary. The Kosovo war demonstrated the usefulness of Russia's role in this regard. While Western analysts have focused on Russian opposition to NATO's air campaign against Serbia, the Russian role in ending that conflict has been largely neglected. It is important to remember that without the intervention of Russian intermediaries who carried the message hammered out with their American and EU colleagues, it is highly unlikely that Slobodan Milosevic would have agreed to withdraw his forces from Kosovo and end the conflict. Russia's good relations with anti-Western states may become helpful again in the future in resolving conflicts between NATO members and these states.

While Russia is adamantly opposed to further NATO expansion, it continues to support EU enlargement. Yet EU enlargement may turn out to be a much bigger threat to Russia than NATO enlargement. In the past, the European Community (and later the EU) was willing to let its members sign on to parts of the community while staying out of other parts. Thus, Britain and Denmark are not part of the euro-zone, Britain and Ireland do not participate in the Schengen open borders agreement, and Britain did not sign the Social Charter of the Maastricht Treaty for several years.

The present EU policy, on the other hand, requires new members to adopt all EU rules immediately upon entry. This policy, especially as regards border controls, may be detrimental to countries such as Poland and Lithuania that border non-EU member states. The introduction of visa requirements for travel between Russia and its neighbors would negatively affect economic development on both sides of the border and would pose a hardship for people with relatives on the other side of the border (especially relevant for the Baltic States). If the EU persists in requiring one-size-fits-all membership for new members, then Russia could end up very economically isolated from its nearby neighbors.

IV. The dilemma of the United States and Europe

Russia and the United States are outsiders as far as Europe is concerned (but not necessarily Europeans). Practically the only governmental foothold the United States has in Europe is NATO (business, tourist, and cultural ties are extensive). The U.S. has a historical connection, but it might have a hard time describing the future connection. Thus it clings to NATO. NATO may enlarge, but it hardly "deepens," unlike the EU. Defense is taking only 2 percent of GDP; the EU could be involved in a much larger percentage. The U.S. recent historical connection to Europe was intimately associated with the Soviet Union. It is far less so with Russia.

In any case, it is said that NATO will have to redefine its mission if it is to remain relevant for the long-term in the post-Cold War world. One possibility is to transform NATO into the basis of a true security community of Europe. But the nature of a security community, as opposed to a security alliance against a threat, is inclusion rather than exclusion. That means it should be extended to include countries such as Russia, Ukraine, and Serbia. Only if all of Europe were within a single security community would the possibilities of state-on-state conflicts or the formation of blocs be managed.

A transformation of NATO into a security community would also require the United States to review its role in such a security system. A large American troop presence in Germany might not be necessary in this circumstance. America might have to find new ways of relating to Europe on security matters and this relationship might be one of greater equality than has been the case in the past.

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